

- FRED** All right, here we are! Tim, we had a nice chat. We had a gumbo and a chili and we're just going to have some
- BOUCHARD:** free improvisation here. I think that's what it boils down to. You teach that, so we should be able to maneuver it. Take me through the changes!
- TIM RAY:** Absolutely! Happy to go wherever the moment takes us, that's the whole idea of it.
- FRED** So, the beasts in our lives, wow. Did you have a dog when you were a tiny tot?
- BOUCHARD:**
- TIM RAY:** I did. Yeah, my family always had a dog and dogs have always, not always but mostly, been part of my life. Moving from Arizona where I grew up where people have lots of space and big yards and dogs to Boston where most people when they move initially to Boston they have a small apartment which was the case for me. So there was a period of time where I didn't have a dog but then when we moved out to the suburbs. Of course the first consideration was, "Is the yard big enough to have a dog?", and then of course a house big enough to have a big piano. Those are the two on my list. So yeah, I have two dogs now and they're both big mutts and they're great and great fun. They do play into the music, there's pictures of each in various of my recordings, you know, the CD jacket. And then in terms of composition too. Sometimes I write songs, there's a couple of songs on the solo piano recording that I made that kind of have a dog focused bent if you will, reflecting some of the ways of being with your dog, going out, talking walks, hanging out afterwards so some of those activities kind of find their way into my musical inspiration. And then we were talking about the Tre Corda recording called Squeaky Toy which of course, Squeaky Toy, refers to the dog toy and that.
- FRED** There's a great shot on the cover by the way. You don't know if it's a microphone cover or some sort of a mine or
- BOUCHARD:** what it might be.
- TIM RAY:** It's true! People have made a lot of interesting guesses as to what that big orange thing is on the cover of the CD.
- FRED** Maybe a sex toy!
- BOUCHARD:**
- TIM RAY:** Yeah, it could be that too! Somebody said that they thought maybe it was like a microscopic slide of some fungus or something. Sometimes I laugh 'cause of course I say, "Well no. It's basically just a rubber dog toy that my dog used to squeak." Of course being a musician and having a dog I was around these squeaking dog noises a lot and this particular dog. Most dogs treat the squeaky toy as just something you go fetch and you bring back and whatever. But this dog actually, of course I am anthropomorphising, but I felt like the dog was sort of treating it like a musical instrument. He would put it in his mouth in different angles and try different velocity of chewing on it to get different tones and different durations and to me I thought, "Ah, okay."
- FRED** Sophisticated pup!
- BOUCHARD:**
- TIM RAY:** Yeah, maybe with opposable thumbs this creature could be a horn player. So, it does, it influences it.

FRED BOUCHARD: I grew up with pets, not furry ones, and I always felt a certain empathy toward sticking my finger in the cage and having the bird give me a bite and we read *Travels with Charlie* in my literature class and he mentioned dogs, a noble poodle like Steinbecks, and kids really really respond to that. There's a lot of empathizing that goes on with pets in relationships you can't have with your human family or companions. It's deep and it's intimate.

TIM RAY: It's true, it is. There's so many examples of that both in literature like you say and society, movies, people getting all upset. You can watch a movie today where like a hundred or a thousand people get killed but as soon as the dog gets hurt, everyone gets upset about it.

FRED BOUCHARD: Perfect example, they euthanized that giraffe in Denmark a couple of weeks ago and people were freaking out over that and somebody writes to the *Globe* and says, "Hey, what about the 150,000 dead in Syria in the last few years. These are people, folks."

TIM RAY: I know, yeah.

FRED BOUCHARD: So we have kind of a two edged sword of how we look at it.

TIM RAY: But you're right, there's powerful connections between people and their animals and you're right, sometimes it's not always reflective of what maybe the larger society's values should be, but it's there.

FRED BOUCHARD: So, what was it like growing up in Arizona with the dog and your grandfather who played the piano and?

TIM RAY: That's true, yeah. No, I had a very nice childhood in Arizona, Phoenix area. As you mentioned my grandfather was a musician. He played piano and he played guitar too. He was immigrated from Germany and played in these polka bands and he didn't initially come to Arizona. He came first to Milwaukee where a lot of German immigrants came around that time, pre-World War Two. He had his brother who was my uncle, who I never knew, who was a violinist and they had this band and they played dances. He was never a schooled musician, he played strictly by ear, but he loved music to death and he was always so joyful when he was at the piano, singing out of key and playing the wrong chord changes, but he loved music. While he was never strictly speaking a teacher for me, I think in some ways his joy of music was passed to me and so it got me interested at a very early age.

FRED BOUCHARD: That's really huge. Better to have joy and even if the technique's a little rough than to be strictly fingering scales and having your knuckles wrapped if you get it wrong. The traditions go very very deep in Germany for amateur musicians. Every little town has got its own amateur symphony or a band or something. So the roots are a great fan base and a great racial understanding of what music is all about. I think we missed that to some extent here.

TIM RAY: Yeah, I think you're right. Obviously we talk about so many things at Berklee in terms of music theory and practice and technique as you said and of course those are all very important to developing a skill on an instrument but you're right. I think sometimes the joy of it gets left behind a little bit. I try to communicate that in my own way to my students.

FRED BOUCHARD: There are different ways of communicating that. Instead of calling attention to mistakes you just say, "Well, that's okay." Just roll right over it and say, "Just don't do it again, you'll know better next time." Instead of holding it up and making a big stink over it.

TIM RAY: [Laughs] It's true! And as we all know one of our favorite pianists from the history of jazz Theolonius Monk, he was all about the mistakes. I'm always paraphrasing the quote, "There are two kinds of wrong notes" You've probably heard this quote, Theolonious Monk, "There are two kinds of wrong notes: the regular kind, and the kind that don't sound too good." He spent a lot of his time playing the regular kind of wrong notes.

FRED BOUCHARD: He was trying to get in the cracks! He was trying to get quarter notes and eighth notes. He was ahead of his time, he was a microtonal dude. Fiuczynski likes to talk about that. Oh yeah, Monk was endless. You do a lot of Monk coverage in your music. You've recorded some of his tunes and what did I read you had a Monk tribute performance?

TIM RAY: Right, yeah I do. He's one of my big influences among many other piano players but Theolonious Monk is certainly in the top three I would say. And yeah, I do, I have recorded some of his music and I do a solo piano program for concerts. I haven't done one here at school yet, I should actually do that. But I do, when I perform, sometimes a Theolonious Monk solo concert where I just do a lot of his music and I do maybe one or two of my songs that are influenced by Monk. But yeah, his writing, as you know, is just so rich with ideas and motifs and harmony and melody. It's so ripe with ways to treat it. Like I think a lot of pianists, I try to honor the spirit of Monk when I'm playing his music without actually trying to sound like Theolonious Monk. I'm still trying to sound like myself but I'm very much influenced by his work and by his approach to music.

FRED BOUCHARD: There's something you said there that really puts Monk on a global scale; how easily treatable his music is in other contexts and still sounds like Monk. That Hal Willner album that came out 30 years ago, at least 30 years ago, with the jug band and Dave Grisman playing his banjo and tubas and whatever. It's all Monk and it all works. That guy Anthony Brown out in the west coast did that amazing album with all those Eastern instruments. He had Wu Man or something like that playing Erhu, what is that instrument, that little string instrument of China?

TIM RAY: Oh, I know which one you mean, can't think of the name either!

FRED BOUCHARD: We're going way off on tangents now. [Laughs] Let's go back to Arizona and your first musical experiences.

TIM RAY: Right, okay! I think as I said, my grandfather showed me a few things on the piano but my parents quickly figured out he was not gonna be a proper teacher so they got me piano lessons like a lot of young children. I think I was around six or seven years old at the time and played a lot of what a lot of kids play like classical music. So I was learning piano scales, learning to read music which is all great, but I was also always playing by ear too. I didn't really know about jazz at that age but I was picking up songs off of the radio and learning them, just trying to play them. The ear was always a part of it for me. And, I guess around the time I was in high school, I became aware of jazz music and to me that was the perfect combination of what I felt like I could do which was play stuff that was notated and play stuff by ear, you know, improvise. To me that was like, "Oh, I gotta get into this! I gotta figure this stuff out!"

FRED BOUCHARD: Aha moment.

TIM RAY: Yeah, that was kind of an aha moment. I mean, I was playing in pop bands too which is fine but yeah, that's really when the jazz bug bit me. So I was playing in jazz bands in high school and certainly started studying with a local pianist in Arizona named Charles Lewis who, I don't know if you've ever spoken with Allan Chase - he was also from Phoenix, Charles Lewis was a big influence on his playing as well. And this pianist, local guy, but really great. And he was the one who really turned me on to, "This is Oscar Peterson, this is Wynton Kelly, this is Ray Bryant." He showed me all of the ABC's of all of the great jazz pianists over the years. I just kind of took it and ran with it. Studied, went to college in Arizona at the university.

FRED BOUCHARD: ASU?

TIM RAY: Right, Arizona State University and studied some more with another fine pianist named Chuck Marohnic.

FRED BOUCHARD: Sure!

TIM RAY: Yeah, you might have heard of him.

FRED BOUCHARD: I've heard of him, yeah.

TIM RAY: And then I was doing lots of local gigs, playing with a lot of local singers and really enjoying it. But I felt like by the time I had finished college I felt like I kind of needed to get out of Phoenix, put myself into a little bit bigger pond culturally. Phoenix is great but in terms of arts and culture, I think this is maybe still true today, it's kind of a small town. Sad to say. Physically, there's actually a larger population than Boston but culturally, it's still very small. So that's when I came here, came to Boston, continued education here. We were talking earlier, I became aware of Fred Hersch who was at the time teaching at New England Conservatory and now is still teaching at New England Conservatory.

FRED BOUCHARD: He's back.

TIM RAY: He's back, yeah, he left for a while but now he's back and he was someone I really wanted to study with. So I thought, "Well, loading up the U-haul and moving to Boston to study with Fred Hersch and to get a master's degree at NEC." So I'm very glad I made that choice.

FRED BOUCHARD: This is about '82?

TIM RAY: This is about '84 actually.

TIM RAY: Yeah, I spent two years studying at NEC and again kind of integrating myself into the local gig scene, meeting musicians of course. Met a lot of Berklee students at that time that are still my friends as well.

FRED BOUCHARD: Oh, do vamp on that for a bit if you would. Just names and places and That's great stuff to hear. We're always trying to interconnect the names and places. They're gonna do a huge search engine on all of these interviews at some point. So we'll be connecting a lot of dots.

TIM RAY: Oh, okay, that's interesting. Yeah sure. Well as I said, this was around '84 through '86 was when I was officially a student at that point at New England Conservatory. There were a lot of great musicians there at the time. There was a pianist named Joel Weiskopf who I got to know pretty well. A bass player named Joe Fitzgerald. A lot of these guys are in New York now. I met a lot of the guys who had just graduated from NEC recently including George Schuller, David Clark who teaches here at Berklee, Bruno Råberg who teaches here at Berklee. There's a lot of that NEC community, and then yeah, like I said, some of the people I went to school with: Ben Sher who's a guitarist here at Berklee, another guy, Harry Skoler, he was a classmate of mine, Norm Zocher.

FRED They're here now!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, these are all guys who are here at Berklee teaching and Ian Froman, a drummer who I'm still friends with. So a lot of those connections and then, like I said, I was meeting a lot of Berklee students at the time too. Donny McCaslin, Laszlo Gardony who's my friend in the piano department who was a Berklee student at that time. Oh gosh, so many others. Tommy Smith, great sax player.

FRED Some great stuff, he's back in Scotland.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: He's back in Scotland, right. So, I was making all of those connections and of course, as you know, that's so much of what going to a school like Berklee or New England Conservatory does is it gives you these connections. Sometimes you lose track of people and oftentimes you don't, they end up being the people you do gigs with for the rest of your life.

FRED Indeed. It takes at least a trio and it could be a big band!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: It's true, yeah.

FRED So, what were some of the places played, some of the clubs, the scenes?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, certainly, some of them still exist; Wally's of course. I put in some time at Wally's. I still play at Wally's from time to time. Such a great institution. And then Ryles, I would do gigs at Ryles. And then there were some other ones that don't exist anymore. Of course the 1369, you remember that, I played there quite a bit. That was also in Inman Square. A place near where I lived at the time in Somerville called The Willow Jazz Club. The home of The Fringe at that time, so I got to know those guys in The Fringe, you know, Bob Gullotti, Lockwood and George Garzone.

FRED Did you sometimes play there with them?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: I did, sometimes I would play there with them and even to this day sometimes I'll play with them or I'll fill in when George can't be there they'll ask me to come in.

FRED Sweet!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, I love that, that's my favorite stuff.

FRED

BOUCHARD:

Do they still have the Lizard Lounge gig?

TIM RAY: No, now they're at the Lilypad. Yeah, their home was the Lizard Lounge for a few years and now they've been at the Lilypad for several years. Yeah, that's a whole other discussion. You can keep that band going for over forty years. Every week they played in some place, once a week.

FRED

BOUCHARD:

It's a magnificent obsession.

TIM RAY: Yeah, it's really remarkable.

FRED

BOUCHARD:

People are elbowing to get into that outpost the Lilypad.

TIM RAY: Yeah I know, still very popular. They still travel around the world, doing shows. It's pretty amazing.

FRED

BOUCHARD:

How about Pooh's Pub?

TIM RAY: You know, I never connected with Pooh's Pub.

FRED

BOUCHARD:

A little more fusiony. Stanton Davis. Tiger's Baku. I just saw Tiger.

TIM RAY: I was fortunate enough to do a recording with Tiger earlier this year. It was a Japanese singer that he was producing, and he has produced some other of her albums. It was great, of course Tiger wrote all these arrangements of Gershwin tunes. Gary Burton was playing on some of them.

FRED

BOUCHARD:

Oh, that one! With the strings?

TIM RAY: With the string quartet, yeah.

FRED

BOUCHARD:

He was just telling me about it.

TIM RAY: Oh yeah, I was part of that. Tim Miller was on guitar. Mark Walker played drums. It was a great band so I was very happy to do that.

FRED

BOUCHARD:

Very nice. Maybe there'll be a trip to Tokyo!

TIM RAY: That'd be great! I'd love to. Of all the places I've been, I told Tiger this, I said, "I played a lot of festivals all over the world. The one place I've never played is Japan!" I feel like that's the hole in my life itinerary. Maybe one day.

FRED BOUCHARD: Back in the eighties the Swing Journal of Japan was a very very thick magazine and they were hungry for information about Boston and what was going on here. So if I did a story on Gary Burton or Pat Metheny or whatever was happening around here at the time they would buy it in the flash. So I figured, "I'm gonna learn Japanese and they're gonna hire me to go over there." Of course it was pipedreaming! But anyway it was fun to have my foot in the door of Japan in that way for a while.

TIM RAY: I'm sure. Sorry it didn't work out!

FRED BOUCHARD: There's a country that has a really long term entrenched appreciation for jazz. It goes way back. They invite singers over that we spurn here. Really good female singers that don't get the time of day. Carol Sloane, Meredith D'Ambrosio So many that were really good in their day and anyway. So there is a culture gap here in the States that got picked up and compensated for in other cultures.

TIM RAY: You're right yeah, it's hard to explain sometimes.

FRED BOUCHARD: Anyway, here you are back in Boston in the eighties and gigging here and there?

TIM RAY: Right, doing gigs and kind of just sort of freelancing, meeting lots of players, playing lots of different kinds of things. And then I was hired to teach at Berklee not too long after I finished the conservatory. This was back in '88 and I was very glad to do it. Frankly, there was still a lot I had to learn about teaching. Now I can safely admit I was doing some on the job training and of course I had all the great lessons that people who were my teachers had given me so I was passing a lot of that information but I was also learning a lot about teaching at the time. I got connected with Lyle Lovett, the singer songwriter. This was early nineties and that was kind of an unusual connection. It was actually a connection from musicians I worked with back in Arizona, it had nothing to do with me being in Boston. But it just happened that they were looking for a piano player and it just so happened that they went out on the East Coast in the middle of a tour and they asked me to come sit in at the Berklee Performance Center. And so I did and met Lyle after the show and he said, "Yeah man, I really like your playing, I wonder if you'd be interested in joining the band." I said, "Well, sure." Of course this wasn't a jazz gig, he was a singer songwriter, doing some country, blues and a dispread array of styles.

FRED BOUCHARD: But always beautifully done.

TIM RAY: But always beautifully done, he was a really talented songwriter, lyricist.

FRED BOUCHARD: Meticulous.

TIM RAY: Yeah, and so I said, "Well sure, I'd be happy to join the band, sounds like a lot of fun. When were you thinking about?" and he was like, "Today."

FRED BOUCHARD: Did he just ax his pianist?

TIM RAY: Yeah, there were some problems. I don't know if I remember this story well enough to say, but yeah, he was having some problems with his pianist and there were some issues around getting in and out of Canada, there were some passport and visa issues. So yeah, next thing you know I'm in Lyle Lovett's touring band.

FRED BOUCHARD: So what did you do? Do you go into Bob Share and said, "I'm out of here"?

TIM RAY: Well I did manage to work out a schedule for the rest of this was towards the end of the semester so I was able to get things covered. And frankly, most of his touring at that time was over the summer so it worked out well. So for several years I did Berklee during the school year and I did Lyle Lovett tours in the summer. And then Lyle became more and more popular, he married Julia Roberts as you know, and for no musical reasons whatsoever all of his concerts started selling out. There's a lesson there about celebrity, I think.

FRED BOUCHARD: Bring the first lady along.

TIM RAY: Yeah. [Laughs] Anyway, needless to say he started touring more and more now he's more popular. So now he's starting to tour year round and that's when I had to make a decision about, I can't really be teaching here and on the road nine months out of the year so I started to let the Berklee teaching go and just do the road thing. And I was also doing local stuff here when I was at home. But a lot of the year I was out on the road. And I loved it, it was a lot of fun. Again, went all over the world, mostly in the US and Canada. Played these great venues for large crowds. I had a lot of fun.

FRED BOUCHARD: Tell us about the Lyle Lovett experience. Did he usually have a pretty sizable group on stage?

TIM RAY: He did, yeah.

FRED BOUCHARD: Horns and everything?

TIM RAY: Right, most of the tours I did with him was his group that he called The Large Band. He didn't want to call it a big band because it wasn't the instrumentation of a jazz big band so he called it his "Large Band." But yeah there were four horn players and four backup singers, kind of a gospel quartet style backup singers and he had several guitars, he had a cello player which influenced me later on 'cause this was a cellist who was very talented and very versatile as a cellist, he wasn't just a classical guy.

FRED BOUCHARD: You liked trading lines or the resonance of the instrument?

TIM RAY: Yeah, both the sound of the instrument and his ability to kind of improvise in sort of a free form. Not only just improvise bass lines and harmony lines but improvise like a soloist would improvise in kind of a free form avant garde style.

FRED BOUCHARD: Cello just began to catch on as an alternative to bass or an additional richness to the sauce.

TIM RAY: Right, exactly. And this guy was very good at figuring that out. John Hagen is his name by the way. He still plays with Lyle, he's one of Lyle's closest friends. I always thought it was funny when Lyle, the story is, this is before I knew him, Lyle was as I said a singer songwriter, he was off doing solo shows in Texas where he was from and finally he got to the point where his gigs would pay enough to hire a second musician. And rather than hire another guitar or a backup singer or a pianist or a bass, he hired this cellist. That was his idea for a second instrument, "I'm playing guitar and singing, I have the budget to hire another musician. I'm gonna hire a cello!"

FRED Visionary!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, and nowadays that wouldn't be quite so unusual but back in the seventies and eighties yeah, that was unheard of.

FRED I had cellists in my class over the last five years who were playing in rock bands and that's much more common now.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, it's much more common now.

FRED But that was wild back in '90 or '92 or whenever it was.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, it's true. So a lot of time with The Large Band and then sometimes Lyle would take out a smaller group which would be usually without horns and singers, kind of just rhythm section and percussion, still the strings or the cello, sometimes he would pick up a string quartet. So it tended to vary.

FRED The book was always kind of mobile, he would try new things?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Well, that was not the case and that was one of the reasons after about fifteen years of doing his gig I felt like I needed to leave. He didn't change over that much. In some ways that was more like a pop band repertoire. He kind of had his hits the people liked and he kind of did them pretty much the same way every night. After a while it got a little monotonous and I just felt like I needed to open up my pallet a little bit.

FRED During those years did he ask you to write charts and do arrangements and things like that?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: He did a little bit yeah. He tended to keep his hands in control of a lot of things and he had the guy who produced his records was also an arranger. He would arrange some of the horns and guitar and pedal steel parts. But occasionally Lyle would. He would actually always open his shows with an instrumental tune which I thought was an interesting idea, so he wasn't on stage for the first song and he liked the band to play a jazz tune. So he would have either myself or the sax player arrange a jazz tune for that instrumentation.

FRED Larsen does that.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, right. So I did one or two arrangements for him for that part of his performance.

FRED All right, where else do we go here?

BOUCHARD:

FRED Talk about the differences between the conservatory and Berklee.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Right, yeah. It's interesting 'cause, as I said, back when I was a student I was at NEC but hanging around at Berklee a lot. And now as a teacher I'm actually at both schools. I'm teaching here at Berklee but I'm also teaching at New England Conservatory part time. And it's interesting to compare them, I mean, everyone sort of has their own opinions I suppose. Traditionally, and I think this is true to a certain degree, the main difference is in philosophy between the two schools - obviously there is a lot of physical differences; Berklee is of course much larger than New England Conservatory. The conservatory is primarily a classical institution with a jazz and contemporary improvisation departments. Much difference in scale of course Berklee has all of the great programs for recording engineers and songwriters and all of these aspects of music other than being a performer or composer whereas if you're at NEC you're pretty gonna be a performer or a composer, that's why you're there. So, there's those differences. But I think there is a philosophical difference too which I think is for the most part true, obviously there's exceptions. Berklee I think is set up more towards the working musician, towards having people graduate with a broad range of skills either as a musician or, as I said, the other ways you can work in music without being a performer. But to leave the college and have a means to find work, to find employment, to be versatile enough so that if someone calls you to play a wedding or something, calls you to write a chart for a singer, you have those skills. And I think that's great and I really support that. Whereas New England Conservatory, the focus is more on finding your own voice, finding your artistic vision. That's not to say that you don't get practical skills at NEC, and it's not to say you don't get artistic guidance here at Berklee, 'cause I think those are all true. But I think, like I said, overall the philosophy at NEC is I think students come there looking to find their way, to find their voice. As I said, it primarily is a performer or a composer. And I think that's valuable as well. Ideally a good education, I think you get both. But to me that's still mostly true. I think for me as a student I was glad to be at NEC at the time I was, partly, Berklee wasn't an option because I was going for a master's degree and there was no master's program here. But I think also just philosophically it was a good place for me to be. I felt like I had a pretty good basis of practical skills as a pianist. I was versatile, could play in different settings and had good accompaniment skills which of course still serve me today. But I needed a little more direction and some artistic vision, some ways of learning how to put out my own voice, put out my own voice, put out my own music, put out my ideas. I think I got that at NEC.

FRED Studying with Fred Hersch would be one way. Working with Gunther Schuller in a large ensemble may be another way. What were some of the other experiences you had there that helped you hone different facets of your persona?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Right, well I think certainly working with Fred Hersch who I studied with and, like I mentioned before, I studied with Miroslav Vitouš my first semester too, the great bassist, and that was interesting too because his approach was very different than anybody else I had ever studied with. But yeah, Fred was very much encouraging of me. He would turn me onto music that I hadn't previously thought about. I am sure in some ways he was the one who got me thinking a little bit more about, because this is something he does so well, the idea of blending classical music and jazz music. Obviously Gunther Schuller and the whole Third Stream, which they don't call it anymore, Department at New England Conservatory. That was the basis of that - blending the ideas of jazz and the ideas of classical into one unit. And that's something with my trio Tre Corda I'm very much pursuing. So with Fred, and I didn't work directly with Gunther at that time, he wasn't a part of the university but I was involved with some projects. When he would come back into the school as a guest conductor I would get involved with some of those projects. Certainly Thom McKinley the pianist and composer had some classes that I loved. Classes in orchestration and arranging that I felt were very interesting. He was just one of those guys who would spend a whole hour just talking one chord.

**FRED
BOUCHARD:** Intense!

TIM RAY: Yeah it was very intense. You could do that at that school. You could spend classes or entire semesters just talking about one tiny bit of information and exploring all the facets of it and I really appreciated that about this school.

**FRED
BOUCHARD:** And he did a lot of big orchestrations himself and he had an international record label that was using symphonies from Prague and all over the place and calling interesting music from major league composers here and anon.

TIM RAY: Yeah, that's true.

**FRED
BOUCHARD:** How was Miroslav's approach unusual and different? I know he was from Czechoslovakia and he had a really amazing bass and he had a really unusual perspective on things, I do remember that.

TIM RAY: Yeah right. As you know he still is an incredible musician and had this amazing bass although it was funny because some bass player friends of mine said later on he had an accident and his bass I think was destroyed in a train or a car accident and he found another bass and he sounded just the same. So maybe it was more him than the bass although he liked to say it was his bass that created this amazing sound that he always got. But yeah, his approach was interesting. I think partly it was interesting for me just to study with him because we ended up playing a lot, him on the bass and me on the piano. We would play duets or I would invite a drummer and we would play trio. And to me it was mostly about his observations. I think hearing observations from him, from the perspective of a bass player, I thought was really interesting about my feel for time and my approach to lines, melodic lines and even, I will never forget one of the early lessons where he didn't play with me he just watched me play a solo piano piece, and he said, "I noticed you're not really using the fourth finger on your left hand much." I had never in all the years I played piano and all the piano teachers I had studied with heard that comment before and I started looking at it and it was like, "Wow, you're right!" And so I started doing exercises to get that finger equal to the rest of them.

**FRED
BOUCHARD:** How about that!

TIM RAY: Yeah and I was like, "Wow!" To this day I'm always shocked that it would be a bass player who would notice that about my technique. So that was interesting. It was interesting to study with him.

FRED BOUCHARD: Let's slide into talking about your developed persona there and applying it to your visions of composition for solo piano and also for the trio that you carved out with Greg and Eugene here, Tre Corda.

TIM RAY: Right, Tre Corda. The composition, I mean, I think I said to you earlier I think of myself primarily as a performer who composes. I think composition is important and certainly what I was talking about at New England Conservatory, the idea of developing a voice, obviously a lot of that has to do with composition. So I've been writing music basically my whole life, certainly more so after I got into college but like I said, I've always been fascinated with the idea of the blending of jazz and classical and other styles too. Of course I love Latin music and certain kinds of popular styles. So I'm certainly freely mixing things together when I compose and I think that is true for solo piano as well as Tre Corda which is the trio I have with Greg Hopkins on trumpet and Eugene Friesen on cello. And that's been kind of my main compositional outlet for the last fourteen or fifteen years. I love writing for that group and I love writing for Greg and Eugene specifically. As you know they're both fantastic players who are multifaceted both in terms of classical and jazz and other styles. Incredible readers, incredible improvisers. As a composer you couldn't really ask for anything better.

FRED BOUCHARD: Perfect balance between discipline and freedom.

TIM RAY: Yes, exactly, for both of them. I think you're right, it's the perfect balance. They have all these great ideas of their own of course they also compose music, particularly Greg, for that trio so it's not just my music so that's another nice feature of it. And then in terms of technically sometimes I will write stuff, I will listen to Eugene particularly. You know, Eugene Friesen and all of his amazing and pretty innovative techniques on the cello. Things that most cellists could only dream of doing and he does them fluently. So sometimes I'll listen to him play and improvise and then I'll think, "Oh, that's a great idea. Maybe I will write something in my next piece that incorporates this thing that he does on the cello." So I will try to write it out.

FRED BOUCHARD: Do you mean the African kora fingering?

TIM RAY: Right, like some of the pizzicato fingering. He treats the cello kind of like the African kora where he sort of, I'm not exactly sure how he does it, but basically using two hands to create sounds instead of just plucking and fingering. So I'll try writing things for the cello and I'll hand it to him and he's like, "Well you know, this isn't actually possible to play on the cello," and I'll say, "Well you played it! I heard you!" So we always have a good laugh about that but he always makes it work. That's a lot of fun, I've really enjoyed composing for that group over the years.

FRED BOUCHARD: In your own solo playing, the new album you gave me "On My Own." Those pieces that you played on there, they don't sound at all written. They sound freely imagined and yet ruminative and focused in their own way.

TIM RAY: Yeah, I'll admit some of them were actually improvisations. There are certain ones that were just improvised and then later on I felt like I needed to put a title. I might have a vague idea of a direction I wanted to go. There is a song called Film Noir which really is an impression of a sound and a mood as you know, that title evokes a mood whether you want it to or not.

FRED Oh yeah, Ran Blake was all over that.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah that was really Ran Blake's bread and butter for a while. So there were some of those, there wasn't a lot of structural composition for some of those. Other ones, they were more written out. That recording, I will tell you briefly, was such a joy to do. It was a solo piano recording and the way I did it was I hired an engineer to come to my house - I have a nice Steinway piano at my house. I hired an engineer to come and set up microphones and I asked him if he wanted to do anything to the room in terms of baffling sounds or anything and he's like, "No, this room sounds fine." So he set up microphones, we plugged it into my computer through a little interface that I had so basically I was just recording to my laptop and then he left. He stayed around for the first day and I played songs and he would tweak the positions of the microphone and then he left and the microphones were set up for two weeks in my house. And I kept the dogs mostly out of the room although sometimes they would wander in and I just played whenever I felt like it and all I had to do was plug in my laptop and hit record. For me it was such a revelation. I know nowadays a lot of people record at home so maybe it's not so groundbreaking, but for me who spent basically my whole career every time I did a recording going to a studio and paying for time.

FRED The clock is ticking! You've got four hours to get this together!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, you know, and there's all of these restrictions about which days are available, which times are available and there's a piano, of course it's a piano you're not used to playing. For me it was just such a joy to be on my own piano, in my own house, whenever I felt like it. I ended up doing most of the recording after midnight. Partly because the neighborhood was quieter at that time. Every now and then if I tried to record in the morning a delivery truck would come by.

FRED Where are you?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: I live in Malden.

FRED So you have enough of a space that you weren't bugging the neighbors.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Right, yeah it never bothered the neighbors. And like I said, for the most part, the sounds from outside wouldn't encroach into the room. Although every now and then a big truck would rumble by and I would have to stop the take and redo it. But for the most part, and like I said, particularly at the middle of the night it was very quiet and that tends to be a good creative time for me anyway so I would just be doing all of these recordings from midnight to four AM.

FRED All of those spookinesses come out.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah and I think you can hear that. People have told me that. They said, "Yeah, this sort of feels like a late night recording, some of these songs."

FRED That's quite a privilege I guess!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: It was! It was really fun to do. There's another badge of songs that I want to release that's not released yet, the one you heard, which is called Volume One New Works. It's almost all original music. There's actually one Lyle Lovett song and one Jane Siberry song but there's not really standards. There's not tunes people would recognize, jazz people would recognize. But I also recorded a bunch of standards and other tunes, some Beatles tunes and some things people would know so hopefully later this year, fingers crossed, I'm gonna put out that album.

FRED Fiftieth anniversary of the Beatles you know! Of the invasion on Ed Sullivan Show just a few days ago. Could be
BOUCHARD: good timing for the christmas stocking stuffer.

TIM RAY: That's what I need, someone who's thinking in terms of marketing! [Laughs]. So yeah, that's how the solo piano thing happened. So that was fun.

FRED Nice! So you build up a portfolio of pieces and you mail them over, you play them now and again and when it
BOUCHARD: comes time to record you've got it well embedded.

TIM RAY: Yeah, basically. I think most of my performances, certainly the solo piano stuff, it's kind of like preparation for some later recording even if the later recording never happens. I am not as disciplined as some people in that I don't write out arrangements particularly but I develop them over time either practicing or in performance and then when it comes time to record I have a pretty good idea of how I wanna approach it.

FRED While we're on this subject, maybe I can get you to talk a little bit about your accompaniment style. You've
BOUCHARD: worked with a lot of singers besides Lyle and Jane like Jan Shapiro, Mili Bermejo, Donna Byrne and others. Maybe you could talk about your approach to accompaniment and how you may switch gears from one to another.

TIM RAY: Sure, yeah. I love working with singers. I know a lot of young players, including a lot of my peers when I was in college and learning to play piano, those aren't the kind of gigs they like or that they seek out because they feel like in some way they're restrictive or because generally when you work with a vocalist, the vocalist is the star of the show. That's certainly true for someone like Lyle Lovett. But for me those kinds of performing opportunities are always really interesting and a really good challenge because I think being a good accompanist is a talent and another thing that people ask me because of course I do all of these different styles; of course the jazz thing, Mili Bermejo who is more in the Latin realm, Lyle Lovett who is a singer songwriter, and I've done recordings with rock groups.

FRED A lot more country/blues.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, country/blues stuff and I love the variety of that too. That for me keeps things kind of fresh.

FRED Totally agree.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY:

Yeah, so I'm always happy to do that. But sometimes people ask, "How do you go from playing country/blues one night to playing Argentinian/ latin music one night to playing avantgarde jazz the next night?" It's all just about listening, and I think the same is true for accompaniment. Obviously you have to have skills, you have to know chords and be able to read and all of these practical things have to be in your toolbox. But then from that point on I think so much of it is about listening and just being willing to put yourself in the place where your job is to make somebody else sound good rather than try to make yourself sound good. And when it comes time for a piano solo, okay sure, I will show off if I have the ability to show off in this style, I will, but that's not why I'm there. Really why I'm there is to make this person sound good. And certainly all of the vocalists I have worked with at one point or another, they mention this to me. They say something to the effect of, "Yeah, you're so easy to work with, it's not a struggle." Or, "I feel like I can do the things I like to do and I can try new things." Jane Siberry that we talked about earlier, really not a jazz singer, more of a singer songwriter like Lyle. But I got in her band and she started getting really interested in improvisation which is not a thing that singer songwriters usually do and she's like, "I just feel like I can try stuff and you'll go with me." "Well sure! That's what I love to do!" So it was so much fun to see her expand her own repertoire to include improvisation. The first recording I did with her was actually a lot of improvised stuff. The great Brian Blade played drums on that. This is kind of before he became the great Brian Blade. So we did some gigs and this recording with Brian, and he was kind of the same. He'd played with Joni Mitchell at that time and he'd done a lot of singer songwriter gigs but he was like, "Let's open them up. Let's make them explore some new things." So that's the accompaniment thing. Obviously listening in the moment is important. Trying to do whatever it takes to make the singer, whoever it is if it's Mili or if it's Dominique Eade or if it's Lisa Thorson or Chris Adams or any of the singers I love working with, whatever I can do to make them sound good. But then sometimes it's listening, doing some homework too. Certainly working with Mili, I've worked with Mili for many many years. I had to do a lot of homework and she was great, she would pass me recordings all the time, "Check out this Cuban pianist. Check out this Mexican mariachi trio and check out and listen to what the guitar is doing, that's what I need from you." So I was always willing to do that.

FRED

And Dan was always a rock .

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY:

And Dan on the bass was always a rock. So I was always happy to learn more about the music that I was trying to play.

FRED

Who are some of your favorite accompanists?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY:

Gosh, that's a really good question. I don't know, there's been so many great pianists over the years. And then some like Bill Evans. Some of the great recordings he did with Tony Bennett, and then other recordings I hear him accompanying and I don't like it quite so much so sometimes some of them are kind of hit and miss. I think Kenny Werner is a great accompanist. I love his accompanying on the Toots Thielemann's recordings. Certainly Herbie if you think about all the Miles Davis stuff. In so many ways his playing on the Miles Davis recordings is important in the history of jazz piano.

FRED

Kind of clustic, always fresh.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Exactly, right. And of course, he was talking great solos as was everybody in that band. Wayne and Tony Williams. But his accompaniment was so innovative, so fresh and so in the moment. That was a big influence for me too. So some of them I think. Some of the Tommy Flanagan certainly, playing behind Ella. Ray Brown as a bassist. Obviously a great bassist in his own right but I love his playing anytime he's playing with Oscar Peterson or basically anything he's done he's always playing just the right notes for whatever the situation is.

FRED Yeah. How about Norman Simmons?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, Norman Simmons. He's someone that doesn't get talked a lot about these days.

FRED No, surely not. I saw him a bunch of times with Joe Williams. Carmen McRae.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: His playing with Carmen was fabulous. Ralph Sharon of course. That one doesn't get talked about a lot.

FRED He was in place for Tony for twenty, twenty-five years. He overlapped a bit with Gray Sargent I think.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: I think so, yeah.

FRED So much good stuff to talk about.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: I know, right.

FRED Let's see here.

BOUCHARD:

FRED What about some of your work as music director? I remember seeing you with Johnny Baseball at A.R.T. a few years ago. I thought that was brilliant. I loved it.

TIM RAY: Me too, that was fun. The musical theater world I have always been dipping my toes in and out of. Frankly that was a situation where it's a show that some friends of mine had written. One of my dear friends from college. It was a composer named Rob Reale and his brother Willie Reale was the lyricist. You can think of them like the modern day Gershwins and they write shows. Obviously not as well known as the Gershwins but writing very nice current Broadway style musicals. They had this show called Johnny Baseball which as you know was about the history of the Boston Red Sox. Talked a little bit about some of the elements of racism and culminating in them winning the World Series in 2004. They wrote this play and as with a lot of shows they brought it to Boston to debut before they tried to take it to New York. So it was at the American Repertory Theater and my friend said, "Listen, we need to get a local musical director in Boston, do you know anybody who would wanna do it?" and I said, "Sure, I wanna do it!" And he was like, "Really, you wanna do that?" and I said, "Yeah, I'd love to!" and so we worked it out and it worked great.

FRED Did you like the music?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: I liked the music, it was fun music! It was like a lot of things that I like. I covered a lot of different styles, a lot of popular styles but there were some jazzy things going on in there too. So it was a lot of fun for me. There was an eight piece group, orchestra if you wanna call it that. I was playing keyboards and conducting. Like I said, an eight piece group with some horn players and a rhythm section. It was a lot of fun. It was a world, like I said, I don't work in a lot. I've been in the pit in some of the theaters downtown playing keyboard parts. But this was a great experience for me both working with actors 'cause of course as the musical director you're not just in charge of the musicians, you're also in charge of making the actors sound good.

FRED BOUCHARD: Getting everything timed. Wicked.

TIM RAY: Getting everything timed right, trying to be a vocal coach when that's needed and of course dealing with the egos of actors which is not always easy. Not quite prepared for that, I was. Although I had a very good mentor, a musical director from New York called Wendy Cavett who was helping me out a lot during the rehearsal process. She was invaluable in kind of getting my feet wet and helped me with some of my conducting skills which had gone rusty since I had been in college.

FRED BOUCHARD: Where did you take that, NEC or here?

TIM RAY: At NEC. Although I have always thought, you mentioned sitting in on somebody's class earlier, I have this list of classes I wanna sit in on when I'm not teaching here at Berklee and conducting is one of them. I feel like I need to get my conducting skills honed again.

FRED BOUCHARD: Francisco Noya. He's a cat.

TIM RAY: Oh, for sure, yeah. So that was a lot of fun. I really enjoyed doing that and the show really didn't survive past Boston.

FRED BOUCHARD: Oh, it never made it to Manhattan?

TIM RAY: No, it never did. It did have another life briefly in Williamstown about a year ago. So that was cool.

FRED BOUCHARD: Did you go out there for it?

TIM RAY: I wasn't a part of it but I went to go see it because some of my friends were still in the cast, so I went to go see them. But I couldn't do the

FRED BOUCHARD: That might be a tough one to get to play in Manhattan 'cause of all the anti-Red-Sox-nation sediment.

TIM RAY: I think that was always gonna be the biggest hurdle. Obviously it's always hard to get a show up in Manhattan regardless of what it's about. But I think the fact that the focus of it was a baseball show that was not about the Yankees I think was always gonna be the biggest hurdle.

FRED You should fly into Tampa or Sarasota.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, maybe! I'd go out there!

FRED So, you hadn't had any more opportunities of that nature?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: No, not since that. That was the last time I had something like that.

FRED Nice to get your feet wet and get thrown in another pond!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Exactly, yeah, precisely.

FRED Talk about change of pace!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: That was a big one for me. So I really enjoyed that.

FRED I guess we're sort of coming into the homestretch here. Tim, where else can we go?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, I don't know.

FRED We talked about your love for Monk. Any other pianists composers that you're crazy about? Bartók!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, right! The trio, Tre Corda, as we talked about classical/jazz so certainly some of the Monk stuff filters into those compositions but Bartók is one of my favorite composers, Stravinsky as well. It was interesting actually, I heard the last Herbie Hancock lecture. I don't know if you have been going to those in Sanders Theater.

FRED The one on Monday or the one on Wednesday?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: It was the one on the Wednesday, I think it was his last week.

FRED I gotta get to the next one.

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, as you know, there's a whole series of them.

FRED Did you have to get a ticket?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: You did, it's free but you do have to get a ticket ahead of time.

FRED I went to the last Wynton one. That was three days before the first Herbie one. But I didn't make it to Herbie. But anyway, go ahead!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: It was great. Herbie played a little bit and talked a little bit about some of his influences and it was so funny 'cause the first thing he said when he talked about the composers that influenced him was Bartók and Stravinsky and I thought, "Wow!" I am sure I wasn't the first guy to like Bartók and Stravinsky but I was so surprised he mentioned my two favorite composers from that era was the two he mentioned right off the top.

FRED BOUCHARD: Well, surely; Stravinsky was listening to ragtime. James Reese Europe, whoever was coming over back in the teens and he had his ear on that big time. Maybe James P. Johnson or Willie the Lion or somebody. He wrote those little three raggy pieces. I just heard somebody play them.

TIM RAY: Oh, really?

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah, live. But anyway, then Bartók. He's like Monk in terms of creating angular melodies that just go on and on. Adaptable. Transformable.

TIM RAY: Absolutely, yeah. Both of them, but particularly Bartók in my mind, it's so much of a jazz conception: Taking those folk songs and turning them into something else. Same thing jazz players have been doing for years. Taking existing songs, popular songs - "I Got Rhythm" - and turning them into something else.

FRED BOUCHARD: Any decent piano teacher is gonna have the kids play Microcosmos from their first or second year.

TIM RAY: I know, I give Bartók to my students at Berklee all the time. So yeah, Bartók has always fascinated me just his harmonic language, his rhythmic language. The recording that you have, the recent Tre Corda recording called Squeaky Toy, there's three pieces that are Bartók. They're called improvisations, I actually ran into these when I was in college and there's a collection of eight of them. They're these short piano pieces that Bartók wrote. They're called improvisations but of course they're not improvisations, they're all written out like you would expect in classical music. As a student I always thought that would be so much fun to play, 'cause you get to improvise and of course my classical teacher kind of said, "No no no, you have to play the notes." And so that's what I did, but I still loved them and then I ran into them again a few years ago and I thought, "We should open these up for improvisation!" So that's what we did! With Greg and Eugene. So I scored them, not all eight of them, I just did three of them for Greg and Eugene and the trio. We played the written material and then in the middle section we opened it up for some improvisation and tried to stay in the vibe, tried to stay in that language harmonically and rhythmically that Bartók creates but spontaneously create new music. And then, like a jazz tune, you finish up with the written material in the end. I think it worked really well.

FRED BOUCHARD: I agree, I loved it.

TIM RAY: But their music also influences my own composition. There's some of my pieces on some of those recordings that kind of reflect some of those ideas that Bartók or Stravinsky had gotten to me in some way or another. Just little kernels of, "Oh yeah, this is a great idea, let's try turning this into a section." So yeah, they've been big influences. Certainly other pianists you have to talk about Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn as far as composers in any sense and in terms of how I've been influenced. Evans as well of course. There are so many great pianists/composers. Monk is probably always gonna be my favorite though.

FRED BOUCHARD: Are you hearing any new kids on the block that are knocking your socks off? Just in your free listening time?

TIM RAY: Yeah, that's a good question.

FRED BOUCHARD: I mean the younger generation of cats coming along either in your classroom or out in the Cirrus clouds.

TIM RAY: Right, yeah. I know there's so many great musicians and certainly great pianists that I've become more and more aware of including sometimes my piano students are bringing in stuff and they're like, "I wanna learn this tune," and this was a few years ago, "by Robert Glasper." "Oh, who's that?" And then I find out about Robert Glasper. Great player, interesting. Certainly some of the people I've been checking out recently have been I wouldn't say super young but Vijay Iyer and Jason Maron of course has got some great stuff going on. His ideas are always really interesting to me. So those are probably kind of the "younger" and like I said they're not hot off the presses but I think of them as the younger generation. Aaron Goldberg of course is doing some great stuff, I love his playing.

FRED BOUCHARD: I went to school with his dad. He's very hip, I love Aaron.

TIM RAY: And he's a super nice guy too.

FRED BOUCHARD: He is, he's a lovely fellow. Last time I saw him was down at the Jazz Standard a few years ago and I will be going down there this Friday to see Ravi Coltrane with his band. One of my rare voyages to New York. You get to Manhattan much?

TIM RAY: Not as much as I used to. I used to go fairly regularly either to just hang out and go see shows or because I had gigs. Now I'm a little bit more judicious about when I go and it's usually just because I'm so busy doing other things but I still go several times a year. Again, either to just hang out with friends and catch a show or

FRED BOUCHARD: Getting infusion of the latest vibe. You put on that mental beret and grow that goatee again. [Laughs] We're hip!

TIM RAY: [Laughs] Yeah, I know that's the hipsters.

FRED BOUCHARD: Tim, thanks a lot this was great.

TIM RAY: My pleasure Fred, thank you.

FRED BOUCHARD: It was really a ball to get together and talk about music. That's what we love!

TIM RAY: That's what we love to talk about.

FRED BOUCHARD: Thanks again.

TIM RAY: My pleasure, it's been fun.

FRED BOUCHARD: Did we come in under the wire there?

CAMERA Oh yeah. We still have a little bit of time.

OPERATOR:

TIM RAY: Oh we do, oh okay.

FRED BOUCHARD: Any P.S.? I thought you had given me the last sign there.

CAMERA Oh, just the ten minutes.

OPERATOR:

FRED BOUCHARD: Oh okay, that was a while back.

FRED BOUCHARD: Any kind of a wrap up thought? Anything we missed? Any funny stories from television?

TIM RAY: Oh, right.

FRED BOUCHARD: What about Late Night with Leno or those cats? Was that with Lyle lots of the times?

TIM RAY: Yeah, most of them with Lyle, once or twice with Jane Siberry or another singer songwriter I worked with. But most of the time it was with Lyle. We actually did Carson a couple of times. Which is fun.

FRED BOUCHARD: The next would be Seth Meyers or Jimmy Fallon.

TIM RAY: Right, yeah Fallon I guess. Those were fun.

FRED BOUCHARD: Are you doing anything in the classroom to break down the walls between jazz and classical. Kind of getting kids to throw out old bogus old fashioned ideas or?

TIM RAY: I'm trying to, yeah. I'm not doing it with every student but occasionally I will run into a private student I feel like has a capacity to kind of get it and then the need to start coming up with some fresh ideas, who might just begin to We all do it. I am sure I was like this too as a student. They come in and they play great but they only really can do Keith Jarrett or they really can only do Wynton Kelly so I try to broaden that approach a little bit. I did have a student and I never followed up. I kind of lost track of him actually, I think maybe he's not at Berklee anymore. His name is Roman Maresz. This really fine, fine pianist from Monaco of all places. His father is a famous classical composer.

FRED BOUCHARD: M-a-r-e-s-h?

TIM RAY: No, it's M-a-r-e-s-z.

FRED BOUCHARD: That might be Romanian or something.

TIM RAY: Yeah, that's probably where the family is from. I've always been curious. I should just probably google him like anybody else would do. He actually came to Berklee already kind of doing that a little bit. He was playing a lot of twentieth century classical music just on its own but then he was working on incorporating that into his own playing and we really clicked on that level. We had some really interesting discussions about it.

FRED Any battles of the keyboard?

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: Yeah, right we would play some duets. "Okay, now let's try to do it like Debussy would have done it!" [Laughs] So that was fun. I guess on occasion I will find a student who's open to that. But not everybody who comes along will be able to do that, will get it, at least not to my experience.

FRED I try to open up their ears with playing a lot of contemporary non-vocal, world music bands in my Music
BOUCHARD: Journalism class and some of them freak out and some of them get it and some of them say it's boring. You never know what the reaction is gonna be.

TIM RAY: It's true.

FRED Okay, thanks again!

BOUCHARD:

TIM RAY: All right, my pleasure!

FRED All right, we'll wrap it this time, thanks.

BOUCHARD: